

REMARKS:

The applicant has carefully considered the position of the examiner on **Claims 8 and 9** over the prior art reference **US patent No. 3,552, 321 to Priebe**. The independent **claim 8** was previously constructed in terms of means-plus-function limitations. According to **MPEP 2114 Apparatus and Article Claims-Functional Language**, while features of an apparatus may be recited either structurally or functionally, claims must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure. The applicant has presented arguments along this line of reasoning in the previous response.

However, it may be not straightforward to tell the structural difference for a claim recited functionally. Therefore, the applicant has added explicit structural limitations as an amendment to **claim 8**. Specifically, the amendment recites the unique structure of the central rail: “said central rail has substantially vertical surfaces symmetric with the central vertical plane of said track, a plurality of guiding wheels engaged on said substantially vertical surfaces of said central rail for centering the vehicle on the track”.

In **US Patent 3,552, 321**, in the main loop, the through car (10) has wheels (12) engaged on the top surface of the central rail (13) for supporting the vehicle, and horizontal wheels (15) engaged on the side rails (14) for lateral stability, best shown in **Figs 5, 6, and 7**. It **does not** have wheels engaged on substantially vertical surfaces on the central rail. For the local loop in **US Patent 3,552, 321**, a central rail is **not even** present. As the central rail in the present invention does not support the weight of the vehicles, a light structure is possible for the quick switching function necessary for the efficient operation of the system.

This amendment would place **Claims 8 and 9** in condition for allowance. The applicant would appreciate the kind consideration of the above explanations by the examiner.